

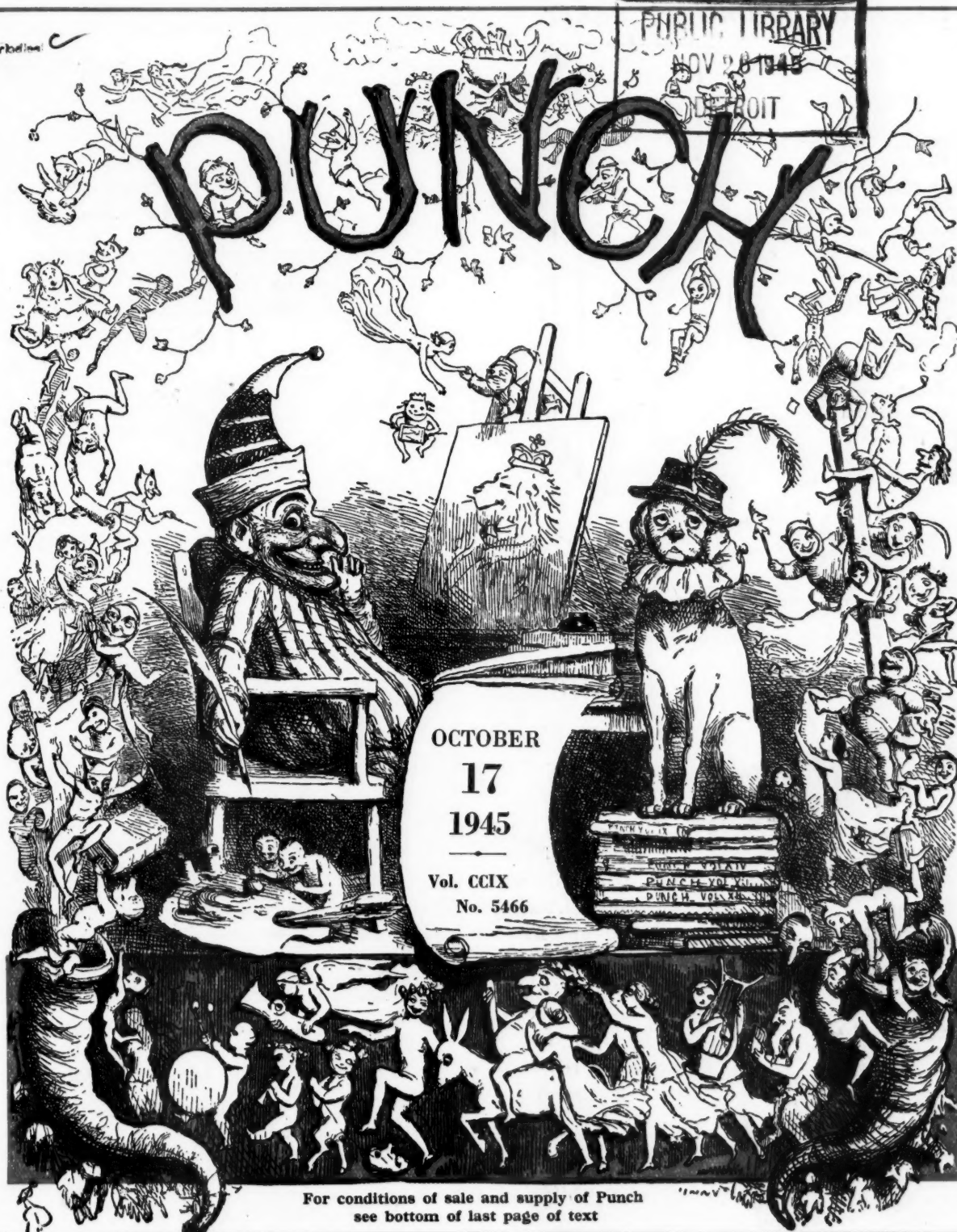
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W/111

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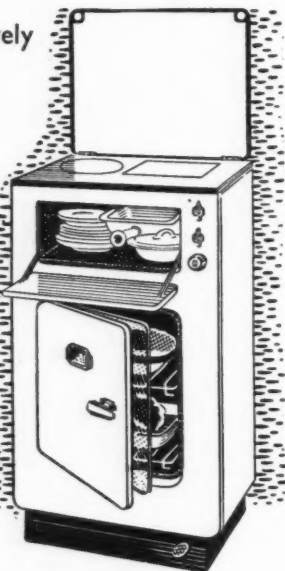
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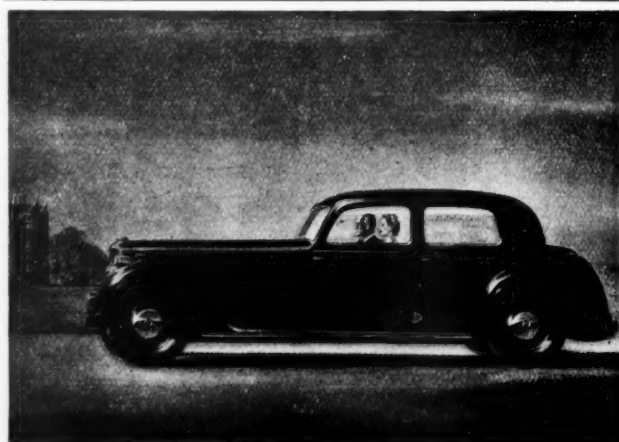
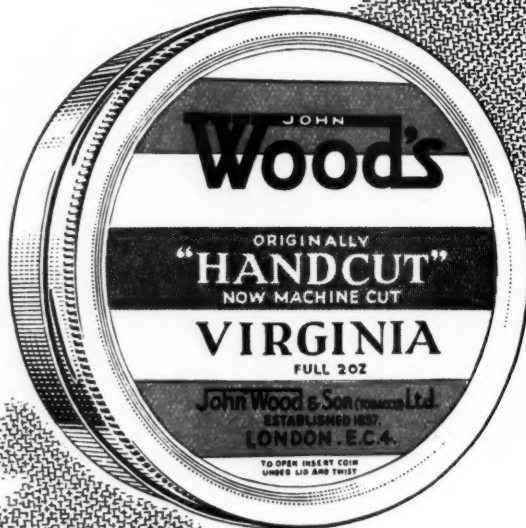
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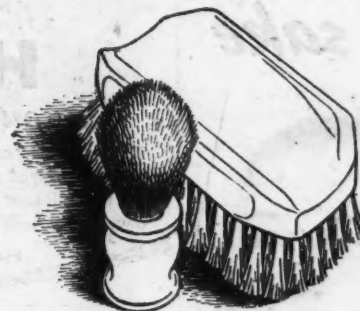
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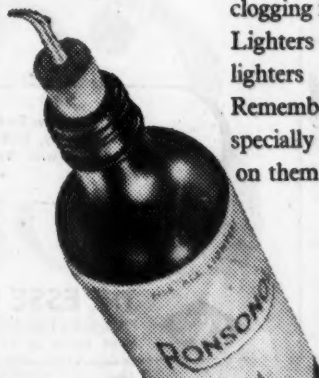
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HAPPY DAYS —  
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AND you won't get the cold shoulder when you serve it with Yorkshire Relish. Thick and Thin, they give a snap to the appetite and help to make plain fare good.

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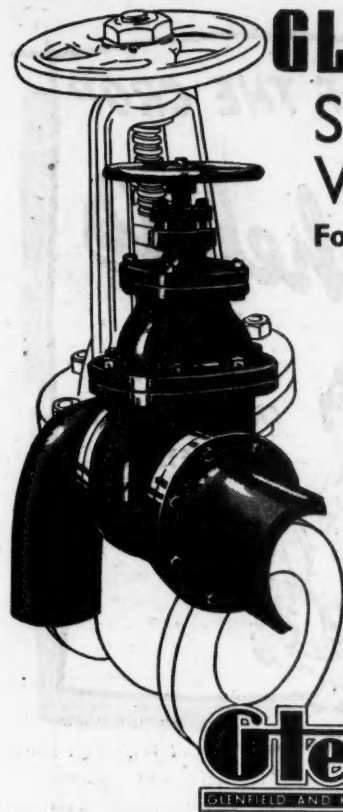
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**'ALKIA' SALTRATES**

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I bought them during the last war, in 1917. They have served me loyally in various parts of the world whilst engaged in somewhat arduous duties in shipyards and dry-docks, on locomotive footplates, and on civil engineering contracts.

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**GUARANTEED WATERPROOF**



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Makers of  
FINE SOAPS  
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**WHEREVER SOMETHING'S COOKING**

**They led me up the  
garden, Mr. Barratt**



Yes, that's about as much walking as my feet ever did—before I got my first Barratts. But that's a long way back—hundreds of pleasant healthy miles!

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Barratts, Northampton—and branches all over the country.



You get it in the steaming fragrance of coffee just brewed . . . freshness which is heightened and enhanced when allied to that of crisp, appetising and satisfying McVitie & Price Biscuits.

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# PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCIX No. 5466

October 17 1945

## Charivaria

SEVERAL thousand more American service-men left Britain last week, just missing the summer.

In regard to future peace conferences it is expected that Foreign Ministers will go all out to make them a success, even if it is only one at a time.

"Interest in railway operation appears to be spreading," runs a news comment. People are beginning to inquire into the secrets of our marvellously efficient lack of system.

Food zones are to go. London will no longer be denied its fair share of what there is none of elsewhere either.



A theatrical manager wants evening dress banned in the theatre. One reason, we understand, is that dramatic critics creak in their sleep.

In America it is claimed that discordant voices can be rendered soft and musical by a simple method of breath control. We should like to have our milkman tuned.

An observer has noticed that people who wait daily at the Passport Office grow more like the photographs that will ultimately be attached to the documents they are waiting for.

Lift attendants rarely strike in London. So we have noticed. They are always bobbing up and down in cinemas, playing the organ.



### Double-Dyed Villainy

"It is believed," said Mr. Heaton, "that many of these unwanted garments have actually been sold by the recipients which encourages black black marketing."—*Daily paper.*

Franco has friends in Paris, according to a news report. Time will show if he can catch up with them.

Mr. Herbert Morrison said recently that paper was wanted for wallpaper but it would not do to take it away from books. Oh, we don't know. Although it must be admitted that there is a certain monotony in the pattern of best-sellers.

A Manchester dramatist is to have the first performance of a new play staged in London. A revolutionary idea. The dramatic critics will give London the opportunity of knowing the next morning what it thought of Manchester last night.

A Weymouth bride wore valuable 100-year-old stockings. A guest also had some cigarettes.



It is suggested that a world fair be held in Sydney in 1947. It is as well to plan it early. By that time the Big Five will be looking round for a permanent world-problem site.

### Work This Out.

"More men of independent views who would not be brow-beaten by party men of independent views who would not be brow-beaten by party headquarters were wanted."

*Hants. paper.*

"Singing keeps you warm," says a doctor. The waits will soon be with us, but we doubt if they will get any coal this year.



## Assistant Masters : Are They Insane?

Letter-Hour

(From the papers of A. J. Wentworth)

"PLEASE, sir, how do you spell 'codger'?"

Among the tasks of the master on duty on Sundays is invigilation during the boys' letter-writing hour after morning chapel; though invigilation is not the right word perhaps, since one does not have to look out for cribbing or anything of that sort. One is there to help really and to see that the boys keep quiet and get on with their letters. Naturally, if there was any cribbing, I mean if one boy was leaning over to see what the next boy was writing, one would put a stop to it, because they ought to be able to think of something to say to their parents on their own. Besides, we believe in the boys' correspondence being absolutely private—letters are not read and censored here or any of that nonsense, I am glad to say.

The boy who asked me to help with his spelling was young Fraser (red hair and freckles) and for a moment I failed to follow him. "'Codger,' Fraser?" I repeated. "What sort of codger?"

"Silly old codger," said Mason.

There was nothing to get hold of about that, really, though I half suspected impertinence. "Well, Fraser?" I remarked, brushing Mason's interruption aside. "Do you particularly want to use that word? Not that there's anything against it," I added with a smile, "except that it's slang of course and rather old-fashioned slang at that."

Some silly boy asked whether "Geezer" would be more up-to-date, but I signalled to him to be quiet, and to save further argument spelled out Fraser's word. I had just returned to my book, a most interesting biography of Gustavus Adolphus, about whom I have often wondered, when another boy asked me how to spell "coot."

I looked up to find the whole school watching me.

"Get on, get on, you others," I warned them. "Are you writing nature notes, Parkinson?"

He said he was not, going rather red in the face for some reason.

"But, all the same, you wish to tell your parents something about coots, is that it?"

"Only about one, sir."

"I see," I said. "A particular coot. What is there funny in that, Mason?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Then why laugh?"

"I don't know, sir. Sir, are they really mad as well as bald, sir?"

"Stop this silly laughter immediately," I cried, and almost at once the hubbub died down. To my surprise Mason persisted with his question, which I had not been intending to take seriously.

"Sir, why do people say he's as mad as a coot, sir?" he asked. "It's an awfully funny sort of thing to say, isn't it, sir?"

"Sir, there's a book about a pig," began Tremayne excitedly (he is one of my IIIA boys), but I cut him short. "That will do, all of you," I said sharply. "Sensible questions are one thing, but we cannot spend the whole hour discussing the habits of coots. Or pigs either," I added, with a glance at Tremayne. "It's twenty past already."

When Pettigrew asked me how many bats there were in "belfry" I decided the thing was getting beyond a joke. "No more questions for ten minutes," I ordered. "Any

boy who is in difficulties can come up to my desk at the end of that time and ask me quietly."

Quite a number of boys came up when the ten minutes were up, and I was explaining to de Groot about postal rates to Holland (a schoolmaster has to be an expert on a hundred and one things nowadays. Goodness knows what poor old Poole would have made of it all—he was French master here for a number of years until the boys put salt in his hair. There were one or two other contretemps as a matter of fact; the headmaster might have overlooked an isolated incident). Well, I was talking to de Groot, as I was saying, when an infernal shindy broke out about half-way down the queue.

"Stop that scrimmaging about there," I shouted. "Fraser, what are you doing?"

"Somebody hacked me on the heel, sir."

"Sneak," said Mason.

"It isn't sneaking to say 'somebody.'"

"Oh, no! Considering nobody could have hacked you except the next man in the queue."

"You're sneaking yourself now," said Fraser.

I put my spectacles down firmly on the desk and rose to my feet.

"Go to your desks all of you," I said quietly. "I will not have this ridiculous arguing and bickering during Letter-Hour. You can all just get on with it straight away without any more fuss. And stop fiddling with that watch, Jenkins. You've written practically nothing."

Jenkins is a new boy, who probably hasn't had a watch of his own before, but all the same he has been here long enough now to know that he must not fiddle with it in class, or in Letter-Hour, which comes to the same thing in a way. He told me, feebly enough, that he didn't know what to say.

"My dear boy," I replied. "Surely you can write your own letters home. This is not supposed to be a Dictation period. Tell them what you did last week. Tell them what is going to happen next week if you like. Anything interests parents."

"Is anything going to happen next week?" asked Mason.

I always try to avoid sarcasm, but this was too much. "Considering the School plays Fox House away on Wednesday and on Thursday there is a lecture on the Ice Age——"

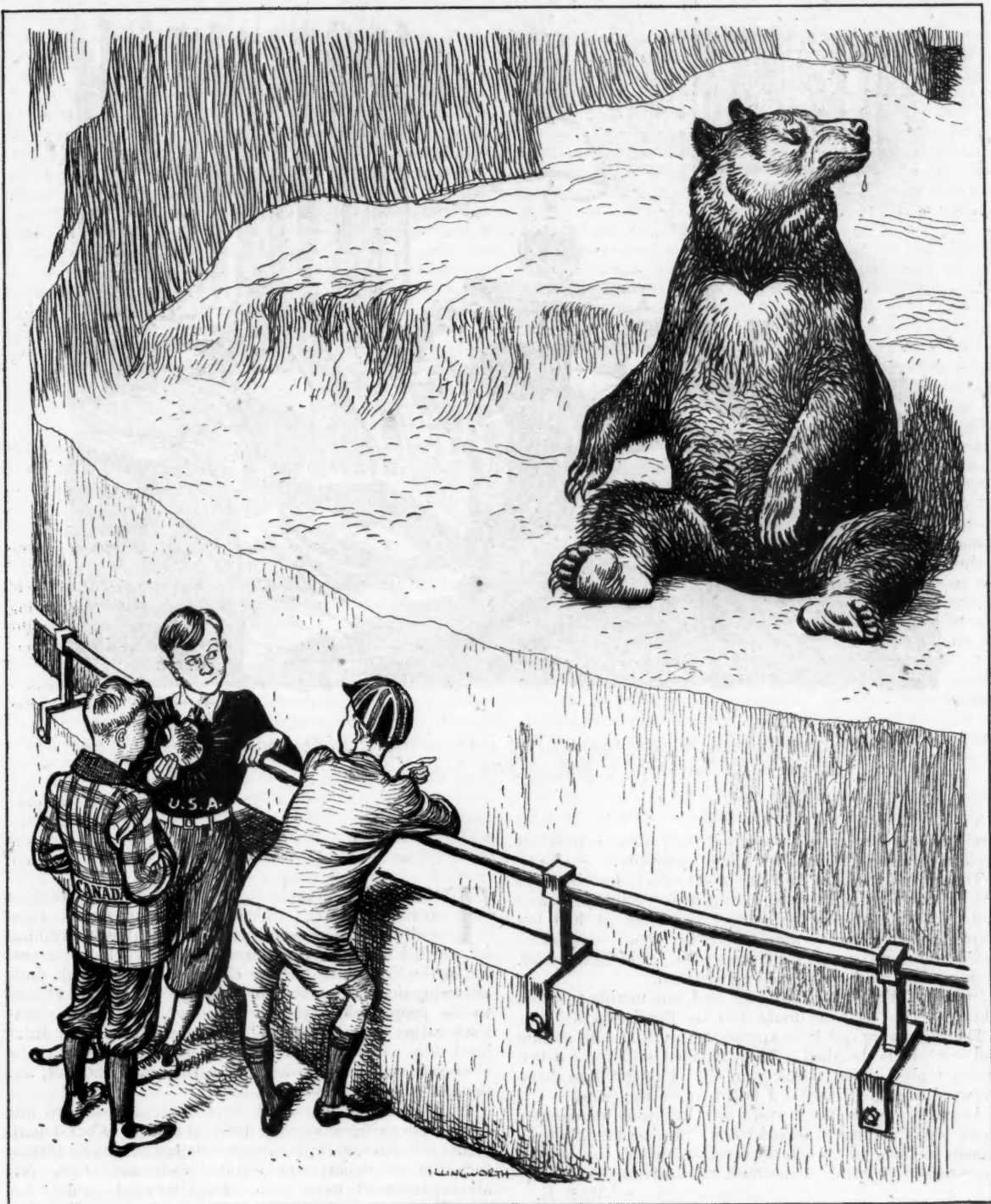
"With slides?" asked some fool.

"—and the first monthly form-order will be out at the week-end, even you, Mason," I continued smoothly, "can hardly regard next week as a complete blank. What boy interrupted me just now?"

Nobody owned up, so I put on a Silence rule. "Anybody who speaks in this room without my permission," I told them, "will get a hundred lines." You could have heard a pin drop. I did hear a nib, as a matter of fact—Mason of course. But I had my eye on him, and he bent down and picked it up without a word. Then, as ill-luck would have it, Miss Coombes came in with some Music Lists.

"Oh, Mr. Wentworth," she began, but the rest of the sentence was lost in a gale of laughter in which, I am ashamed to say, I could not refrain from joining. Somehow the idea of coming down on poor Miss Coombes with a hefty impot was irresistibly comic.

She went very red in the face and marched out without another word, not understanding the joke of course. I am



### THE ATOMIC BUN

"It *might* not be good for his digestion."



*"We certainly seem to have had a lot of secret inventions which would have won the war for us if only we could have kept it going a little longer."*

afraid she will be upset, though I shall make a point of explaining things to her after lunch, naturally.

The absurd incident had one good effect, for the boys settled down straight away, everybody scribbling away quite contentedly for the rest of the hour. I had my suspicions of what they were all writing about—suspicions which were pretty well confirmed when, right at the end, Fraser asked me how to spell embarrassed.

"One 'r,' Fraser," I told him, and was unable to resist adding, "The 'ass,' no doubt you are familiar with?"

The boys were quick to appreciate my little dig at him and everybody laughed. They laughed still more when Fraser replied "Yes, thank you, sir. I've got him down already," though I confess I failed to see the point.

Anyway I hope they won't say anything derogatory about Miss Coombes in their letters. She is a friendly soul, though inclined to be a little weak—of which the boys, I have reason to think, sometimes take advantage.

H. F. E.

#### So Far, So Good

The B.B.C. has some good points, some bad,  
And we, who would concede all men their dues,  
Forgive it much because we've (so far) had  
No incidental music with the news.

## Shops

THE shops I am going to describe to-day are the shops more accurately called department stores, those really big places where you can buy almost anything, by which I mean anything except possibly what you went for in the first place. Other characteristics of such shops are swing doors, lifts, and the catalogues they used to send to the people who owed them money. My readers may have rather forgotten these catalogues, but if they think hard they will remember at least two points about them: clothes were in more colours than they had heard of, and prices went down instead of up.

As its name suggests, this kind of shop is divided into different departments selling different things. Coat departments sell coats, antique furniture departments sell antique furniture, pet departments sell dog-leads, and so on. Not all departments have such straightforward names, but even they cannot fool their customers, who know that they must ask for knitwear when they want knitted things, haberdashery when they want sewing things, and hardware when they are looking for the hardware department. The gift department, on the other hand, has the most straightforward name of all. No customer has ever passed through such a department without a mute acknowledgment of



its genius for extracting the essence of gifthood from life; or, after August, without an uncomfortable suspicion that Christmas is now getting nearer instead of further off.

Each of these big shops has a different way of arranging its departments, which makes it impossible to generalize about the lay-out, but there is a slight tendency for the hardware department to be below ground level. I say very slight because to a customer who has eventually found one on the top floor the tendency is hardly noticeable; but there is an idea that if it is upstairs it is being unusual, a feeling you do not get with gramophone records. The haberdashery has a much firmer trend towards the ground floor, possibly to attract the floaters who have come in out of the rain, and the restaurant is where it always was unless it has been moved, in contrast with the telephones, which are no nearer than they were last time. All departments are apt to be moved now and then, and to cause much visible surprise to customers who like to consider themselves patrons. Perhaps the least movable department is the forbidden bit marked something like "Staff Only" (a bit as interesting to the public as the shelf on the bus where conductors keep their homework), and perhaps the most movable is the one we ourselves happen to be looking for. To make up for this, the lift-attendants are notably welcoming, and, to the people going up to the top floor, quite extraordinarily anxious to stop at every floor to round up more passengers. I should add that those people who keep the lift waiting and rush in breathless look very silly to the other passengers; they do not look silly—as they themselves think—because they are out of breath, but because they have silly faces. A harsh truth, but there it is.

It has often been said that each department store has its own distinctive character. I am not denying this, but I would like to make the point that what has an even more distinctive character is each department. Thus, blanket departments are muffled but businesslike, picture departments are the inevitable result of art against public, even to the extent of radiating several yards of hushed, critical reverence (and the criticism is not all on the public's side); lamp-shades, with the best will in the world, cannot help looking more overcrowded than the average home, simply because they have so many more lamps, and the shoe department strikes a happily restful note, something to do with its rows of cinema-seats and its customers' tendency to take their shoes off. The main feature of the china and glass section, on the other hand, is its mixture of trust and suspicion. The shop trusts its public to the extent of leaving breakable objects near the edges of its shelves, and the public suspects the shop to the extent of not breaking anything, however accidentally, because it knows instinctively it would have to pay; taking those cagy notices asking it to keep off the more expensive pieces as fair warning for its own good.

China and glass being a branch of art, there is always a sprinkling of moochers, and because the passages between the shelves and stands are narrow there are always a few of those obstacles we have all stepped round in our time—people who have not met for years and are giving nearby strangers an outline of their home lives. As for the piano department, where there is so much space that no one ever meets anyone, this has a character like nowhere else. Here those people who have had piano lessons, however long ago, experience a strong temptation to sit down and play without wanting to do anything of the kind: a contradictory emotion made up of the illusion that they are pianists and the knowledge that they are not. The authorities, knowing the public, are safe in leaving the

keyboard lids open, and as an added safeguard they usually have someone playing who knows how to, so that passers-through come out quite happy and almost ennobled by their powers of musical appreciation. As for those people in the gramophone section who stand in soundproof glass cases listening to gramophone records they are not going to buy after all, they come out feeling no worse than we would. I must say a word about the cigarette department, a somewhat aloof corner which depends for its atmosphere on the public's emotions. In the old days, with all those boxes of hundreds and five hundreds, people who asked for packets of ten used to think they were being a nuisance. They do still, but for a different reason.

I do not need to tell you that one of the best-known rules of shopping is that lookers-round shall attract attention and potential buyers shall repel them. The present shortage of assistants has not made much difference, because lookers-round thus cornered feel worse skunks than ever, if less often, while the potential buyers have all the more time to reflect that there must be something wrong with their approach to life. I might say a bit, though, about the subsidiary rules, which show up nicely in a big shop. People buying different things act differently. When they are looking at lamp-shades they peer or revolve, but with furniture they survey first and then close in. You can tell potential furniture-buyers by the liberties they take in sitting on arm-chairs and punching beds, and the lookers-round by their irresponsible flitting from label to label. Piano-buyers are so rarely caught at it that statisticians have no record of their habits, but they think they must be treated like carpet-buyers, only more so. Hat-buyers are all that tradition has invested them with, shoe-buyers are quiet, patient people who like to bring a friend along for a second opinion, and food-buyers fall easily into two classes—themselves and other people. So do a good many other kinds of buyer, but it seems to come out most strongly in a grocery queue. Book-buyers, statisticians say, are the happiest crowd of all; no one worrying anyone, everyone having a nice quiet read, and no nonsense about anything being the wrong size or colour.

Finally, talking of colours, I must mention those people who bring bits of stuff and things out on the pavement to match them by daylight. It does not happen often, and it never fails to fascinate the passers-by; giving them, besides a further proof that other people cannot match colours, a pleasant sensation of incongruity which cannot be defined so much as compared with our reactions to meeting an office-boy carrying a lunch-tray along a crowded street.

### *Sailor Ashore*

OH, I'm home from sea, billies, six weeks late,  
Home from an eight-month trip  
With a hazing skipper and a quick-duke'd mate  
In an ill-found beast of a ship.  
And the hard-tack crawled and the salt-horse stunk,  
And the cargo started to shift,  
And the wind got up, and we could have sunk  
When the main-top-yard came adrift.  
But my pouch jingles guineas, I can steer  
A course of my own on shore.  
And when they're spent, why, I'll stow my gear  
And go back to sea for more.

## Are You Ready for 1950?

**J**UST because I know that people seldom take much notice of my title—so irritated are they by anything that denies them the immediate pleasure of the article itself—I am going to break one of my hardest and fastest rules. I am going to repeat myself—

### ARE YOU READY FOR 1950?

You see, I want you to get the date right. I have not selected 1950 because it happens to mark the centre of gravity of this twentieth century or because the figures have any real numerological significance. In my analysis 1950 *chooses itself* as the year in which Britain will turn the corner from austerity to graceful living, from make-do-and-mend to carefree prosperity.

Let me show you how this conclusion was reached.

It is not always realized how deeply the habits of six years of war economy have embedded themselves in our subconscious minds. Even now the sound of a bus changing gear will make people walk on unconcernedly just as they did during the raids. A few people, it is true, react differently. They dodge into some shop or other, pretending to be engaged on a genuine errand. But invariably they ask for the very something that the shopkeeper has not got—in spite of the notice on the door advertising the deficiency. This of course gives them away. These people are habit addicts, and we should pity them, not blame them.

Then, again, see how people react to the newspapers. The war is over and with it the possibility of some sudden catastrophic announcement. Yet people go on buying newspapers and it is clear that they half expect to see that trouble is brewing or has brewed somewhere.

Once these reflexes get deep down in the human system they take an awful lot of shifting.

It is the same with saving. Long ago we developed the habit of saying, "Well, we can wait a little longer after all these years, can't we?" and we are going to go on saying it, I think. There is a certain satisfaction in the Spartan life.

I know scores of men who prefer, from some profound and obscure motive, to wait a little longer before they begin to catch up with arrears of domestic repairs and renewals. The garage door and the drain-pipes can do without their new coats of

paint for a few more months; the kitchen door, which needs a spoke-shave on its trailing edge, can stick for another winter; and why bother immediately about those loose tiles in the bathroom?

Why spend now when by waiting a few months longer it will be possible to buy better paint, better carpenter's tools and better tile adhesives? The average male argues, as I do, that the thousand and one inventions of war must some day confer immeasurable blessings on the arts of peace. The scientific background of "Mulberry" and "Pluto" and the rest will almost certainly, sooner or later, revolutionize the daily round of civilian life. Why, indeed, spend sooner than sooner or later?

Do you begin to see what I'm driving at?

Another thing, take the advertisements. Practically everybody knows that the car of the future will have its engine at the back and will be made of plastics impregnated with penicillin or something. These cars will be dirt cheap—so cheap that we shall discard them like paper handkerchiefs as soon as they are slightly soiled. What man in his senses is going to buy a car of the old breed now when by waiting four or five years at most he can get what he deserves? It is exactly the same with washing-machines, refrigerators, radio and television sets, lawnmowers, electric irons—everything, in fact. In the circumstances it will not be surprising if industry hesitates to commit itself too soon. The manufacturer's best policy might be to wait and see just what science has up its sleeve.

I fix on 1950 for my dead-line, then, because that is just about the earliest date when:

1. The public will have shaken its mind free of the shackles of war economy.
2. Repairs and renewals will brook no further delay.
3. The science of war will be harnessed to the needs of peace.

And even that date may be optimistic. Should any dramatic new discovery in the world of the atom be announced—some revolutionary change in man's control over the forces of nature that will put him right in line for ease and plenty—we may have to wait until 1960, or even 1970, before the common man gets what he needs.

HOD.

## Audience

**T**HE estate agent was a large smooth man who obviously lived in an Exceptionally Charming Residence (Foothills of Berkshire Downs).

"It is extremely kind of you to allow me to take up your time like this," I said, advancing across the carpet (slightly under one acre). "I wonder if I might offer you a cigar?"

He gave the dry cough I had heard over the telephone, and added the cigar to the collection in his upper waistcoat-pocket. Then he polished his glasses and studied the single sheet of paper on his large smooth desk.

"You may sit down," he said.

I thanked him very much indeed, and sat down on a large smooth chair. For a full two minutes I suppressed the temptation to state my pitiful case, but the silence got too much for me at last.

"I have to vacate my present furnished house at the end of this month. It is very inconvenient—having to vacate it, I mean, although the house itself is very inconvenient too—and the owner has given me notice in a most rude manner, merely because I complained politely that with the winter coming on it would be an advantage to have the back door replaced on its hinges. In the summer months, of course, my wife and I—"

"We have a house of character falling vacant at the end of the month," said the estate agent. The "we" had a regal ring. "A superior, modern, labour-saving property, beautifully furnished."

"Ah," I said—"the chairs in my present house are merely wooden frames covered with aromatic American leather. The bed—"

"Large, light lounge—"

"My front room is decorated in gloomy magenta—"

"Labour-saving kitchen—"

"My kitchen is excessively small, with a water-heater that doesn't heat and a larder door which cannot be opened until a small marble-topped table has been lifted out of the way on to the top of the cooker. The window-fastening is broken and the window bangs maddeningly and lets in flies. The sharp corner of the dresser abuts on—"

"Luxury bathroom—"

"We have never been able to use our bathroom owing to—"

"Large hall—"

"My present hall is fully occupied by the perambulator. It would be easier

to enter the house by the back door, except that the back door only leads into the garden and does not give access to any thoroughfare, particularly as my bicycle has to stand at the foot of the stairs and constitutes an additional obstacle to entry, having to be wheeled into the dining-room by my wife when I shout through the letter-box—the doorbell and knocker being obscured by a yellow and green sun-curtain irremovably nailed to the top of the door. I feel that a large hall—

"Garden front and rear—"

"A large garden?"

"Of course."

"That is capital. My present front garden is so small that I can cut the hedge with ease from a position inside the front-room window, and the rusty remains of a Morrison shelter leaning against the wall only leave room for the dust-bin, which has to stand in the front garden to obviate the men coming through the kitchen when they empty it. The rear garden, once one has smashed one's way through the undergrowth, rotten ladders, defunct wringers and two-legged chairs, has a vegetable-plot mainly occupied by two rusty tin trunks under a tarpaulin, but which nevertheless does yield a small crop of snail-ridden mint—"

"Large, well-stocked garden. Own flowers, vegetables."

"It sounds ideal. Plate and linen?"

"Generous supplies plate and linen."

"The crockery in my present furnished house is so unutterably polyglot that a table laid for four looks like an exhibition of rejected prototypes in the arts and crafts wing of a mental home in the Potteries. The blankets are stained with hair-oil, cough-mixture, morning tea and marmalade; the ragged gaps in the sheets make it—"

"The rent is seven guineas a week."

"It is two guineas more than I have been paying, and three guineas more than I can afford, but I do not complain. I will take the house."

"I think you are very wise indeed. It falls vacant on the first of next month."

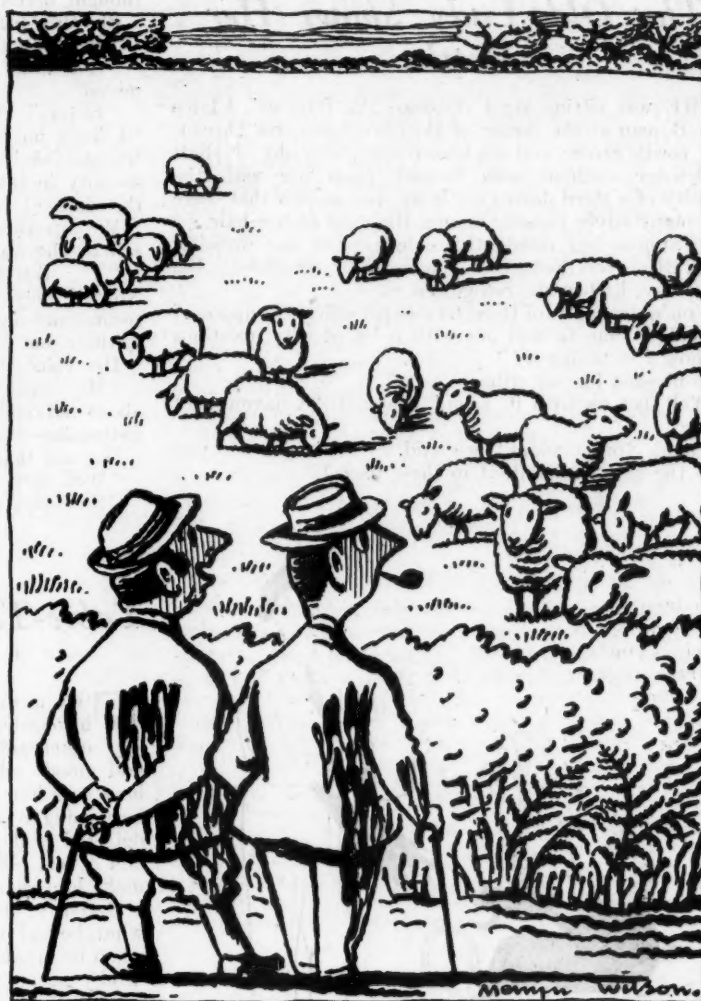
"Nothing could be more convenient," I said, rising and standing to attention—"I am to be ejected on the thirtieth of this—"

The estate agent nodded and coughed drily, glancing at his watch.

"I should like to say again," I continued, "how inexpressibly indebted to you I am for your great kindness, and for having given me so much of your time. I trust I have not talked too much."

He did not answer.

"But if I have," I went on, "it is



"Last year there was nothing here except an American bombing station."

only because I felt that I had found in you a sympathetic and courteous—"

"Here is the address," he said, looking down and absently counting his cigars. "I expect you know where it is."

"I expect so," I said, taking the slip of paper with a slight bow from the hips, and rapidly memorizing its message.

"It's a nice position," he said, expanding.

"Oh, very."

"Very convenient for the station."

"Oh, most."

"Ah," he said, as the door opened and he waved me into the arms of a

clerk who obviously lived in an Architect-built Comfortable Residence in the Beautiful Ashdown Forest—"so you know the house?"

I nodded.

"I live there," I said. J. B. B.

o o

Indubitably

"If, as Mr. Jinnah has been loudly claiming in and out of season, the Muslim League is the sole representative voice of Indian Muslims, the Sind Muslim League, as he has converted it, offers the most unanswerable challenge to an unsustainable claim based on undeniable and indefinable ideals of doubtful political worth and moral value."

Editorial in Indian paper.



## The Old Lady Shows Her Mettle.

SHE was sitting right opposite the Citizens' Advice Bureau at the corner of Morton's Lane and Threadneedle Street, and she looked very, very old. A shaft of October sunlight was focused upon her with the intensity of a third-degree arc lamp, and we saw that there were many silver threads among the gold of her hair.

We approached diffidently, conscious of our dreadful immaturity—she looked so matriarchal, somehow. We were relieved when she recognized us.

"You're from one of these newspaper offices, I suppose," she said, "come to find out with a lot of silly questions just how I'm taking it?"

We blushed for our tribe.

"Well, get on with it, then," she said, "I haven't got all day."

"Thank you, madam," we said. "To begin, are you really the oldest inhabitant in these parts?"



"Look it up for yourself," she said. "I was born in 1694 and celebrated my two hundred and fiftieth birthday last year. You should have seen the candles!"

"Well, well," we said, "you certainly don't look a pay-day over fifty."

She raised her umbrella and made a prod at our ribs. "Go on with you," she laughed, "fifty, indeed!"

Now that we were able to study her at sight, as it were, we were amazed to find her so well preserved. Her face value seemed unimpaired, but there were tell-tale water-marks under her eyes. She seemed to hold a great deal in hidden reserve.

"I know what's coming next," she said. "Well, I attribute my longevity to a lifetime of moderation. I've never suffered from any of those horrible things you see in the advertisements—inflation, flatulence, indigestion, etc. My tastes are simple. Give me a cut off the joint, legally tender, a few green 'uns and a drop of Mint sauce and I'm satisfied. People to-day have such fancy ideas."

We were about to ask for the name of her butcher but thought better of it.

She then recited a list of her Governors, and told us very sadly that most of her issue were fiduciary.

"And what about this move to—er—er—" we stammered.

"Listen," she said, suddenly becoming very serious, "I have no objection at all if they want to make me 'respectable,' as they put it. And a bit of extra social security in my old age would be very welcome after all the service I've given..."

We interrupted her to say that she looked proverbially safe as she was.

"... But I can't say I like the way they're doing it. Now if they said they were going to rehabilitate me, reconstruct me or reconvert me I shouldn't care a sweated farthing, but this word 'nationalize' makes me see red."

Her voice became more shrill.

"Me, mark you, me!" she went on. "Fancy talking about nationalizing me! It's like saying you're going to nationalize roast beef and Yorkshire pudding or—or—"

We said that we knew just what she meant.

"Well, how would you like it?" she said.

"Precisely, madam," we said. "We shouldn't."

## Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

XX

FOR a man so apparently clumsy, flat-footed and inconsiderate in his behaviour, Amos is surprisingly observant of and sensitive to slight changes of tone and mood—when they apply in any way to himself. I have seen him check himself and visibly alter what he had been going to say as, beginning an old story, he has suddenly detected a flicker of glances round the listening circle; and a very slight alteration in the atmosphere will often make him change his course halfway through a cliché.

Recently, for instance, booming away about I forget what, he had just said, "... on land, on sea, and in the ..." when he became aware that everybody present knew with deadly accuracy exactly how his sentence was about to finish. He therefore rasped with his throat slightly, took a gulp of his drink, and concluded: "... pages of the illustrated papers."

\* \* \* \* \*

Amos rather startled us once by declaring that in his view Shakespeare never existed at all. There were several very pained and shocked inquiries whether he had become a Baconian, and he said "Good God, no. Nothing like that. I just credit his editors with his manufacture."

He looked round for a time and at last began to explain: "If there is a large body of drama, the authorship of much of which is doubtful, choosing all the first-rate bits and saying they are by one man is absolutely bound to indicate that this man was a genius."

"You *can't* say that's what has been done——"

"It's not unlike what has been done," Amos insisted.

"The point is, Shakespeare is given the benefit of every literary doubt. No need to say a corrupt text is deliberately manipulated to make it better; just suppose that successive editors, through centuries of his increasing reputation, sincerely choose the 'best' readings that have ever been made, or that it ever strikes them to make, of a given passage. What price the cumulative effect?"



"Sorry about the chair, Ambrose—every blessed thing has been collared for export."

There seemed to be no one present with enough learning to challenge this and Amos looked more and more pleased with himself, "twinkling like a poplar in a light breeze," as somebody observed.

"And the part-authorship business," he went on. "Greene or Fletcher or somebody finds himself really on the beam for a page or two and what's his reward, three hundred years later? 'How admirably Greene could write when he took the trouble'? 'What transcendent work was sometimes produced by Fletcher in the brief flush of inspiration'? Not on your life. 'Here is the authentic voice of Shakespeare,' take it or leave it . . . I tell you," said Amos, leaning forward, "if all the books published in the last forty years had come out anonymously and there were a general belief that most were by more than one author, I could, if I were given a free hand in merely attributing, produce evidence for the existence of such an astoundingly brilliant genius as has never—"

A listener interrupted "What would his name be?" Amos looked modest and said, "Need you ask?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"If this were ten or fifteen years ago," Amos said, when we were discussing the difficulties of the literary life, "I could always live, at a pinch, by periodically turning out a small piece of second-rate 'good' fiction. Those were the days when the stream of consciousness was still a newish toy and it was supposed to be rather highbrow and clever to write a sketch of about twelve hundred words consisting entirely of what an ordinary well-fed reader might think were the thoughts of some under-privileged

semi-literate. I assure you it was possible to write the stuff almost in one's sleep. I don't need to remind you how hard it was to keep awake when reading it."

Here he appeared to go into a trance and began declaiming in a sort of subdued moan what we soon realized was meant to be a typical example: "She sat watching the sunlight stream through the kitchen window. Looked a fair treat, that did, what with all the little specks of dust a-dancing, as you might say. But there, it wasn't sensible to think about specks of dust that way. What would people say? Think a girl was mad, they would . . ." And so on," growled Amos, breaking off, "yards and yards of it, the idea being that the character was revealing herself through the stream of consciousness. Well, maybe, but don't we know all about that character already? Given the circumstances—kitchen, sunlight through window—couldn't we write all her half-chewed thoughts ourselves? There can't be anything fresh or unusual about them, because it would be out of character if there were; so what are we reading the damn sketch at all for?"

He stopped and seemed to be cooling, subsiding, running down. Then he said quite amiably: "As a matter of fact, I never did discover any ordinary reader who read the stuff. It was just *written*, and, for some reason, paid for. The dear, dead, simple days!"

He shook his head.

\* \* \* \* \*

When somebody said something about "throwing a spanner into the works," Amos unexpectedly commented "And the best place for it. Bless me, what would they do at the works without a spanner?" R. M.

o o  
Of Course

"ERRATUM

In our report last week of Dr. R. B. Fawkes' speech regarding V.J. days at Cromer U.D.C. meeting we stated the doctor 'had the gratification of seeing the Council's coronation seats being placed on a bonfire.' This, of course, should have read 'had the gratification of saving the Council's coronation seats from being put on a bonfire.'—*Norfolk paper*.





*"I won't spoil the story by saying who the murderer was, but you boys should certainly read the book."*

### The Golfer

A GOLFER was ther, woned fer by northe,  
 And he was big of braune and grete of worthe.  
 I woot in joustes he had longe y-go;  
 At Andrewes hadde he be, and Westward Ho,  
 And eke at Waltoun Hethe and Soningdale.  
 He bered for the nonce a lethern male  
 That from his thikke sholdres hinged doune;  
 The bokles shene, the bawdric was of broune.  
 Ther-in his iren shaftes shoon as brighte  
 As do the sterres on a frosty nighte.  
 A gipoun and a tabard wered he,  
 With wide trowsers bagged atte knee,  
 That fil in colpouns on his hose gaye  
 Embrouded al with wole, soth to seye.  
 His botes weren souple, and with-al  
 As spiked as it were a castel wal.

Wel coude he drive a balle, and faire kepe  
 That it ne fille in a bunkere depe,  
 Or in the roughe, ther nan ne coude it  
 finde.

He coude rekne wel of everich winde  
 And everich hazart that were him bi-fore;  
 Of chips and puttinge coude he al the  
 lore.

He wolde his ye were kept for anything\*  
 Up-on the balle, and gently wolde he swinge  
 His clubbe backe above his sholdres broode.  
 Ther nas no man mighte playe a lenger woode.  
 A niblick coude he welde, and eke a spoon;  
 Egles and briddes hadde he many oon.  
 Curteis he was of herte, and eke in game;  
 He rood up-on a stot; I noot his name.

\* At all costs





UNOFFICIAL STRIKE

## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done

**Tuesday, October 9th.**—House of Commons: Mr. BEVIN Makes a Statement.

**Wednesday, October 10th.**—House of Lords: Introductions.

House of Commons: The Old Lady Shows Her Bill.

**Thursday, October 11th.**—House of Commons: Promise about Pensions.

**Tuesday, October 9th.**—There was very little of that jocund "after-the-hols." atmosphere about the House of Commons to-day, when the Great Elected reassembled after a six weeks' recess. Even the entry of Ministers and of Opposition leaders—always, hitherto, the occasion for rather strained cheers and counter-cheers—went unnoticed, or at any rate uncheered.

Reason for the thoughtful silence was the failure of the session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London during the recess. It was a failure which was bound to worry those who gave any thought to international affairs, and all M.P.s do that these days.

Most of the Members of the Cabinet crowded on to the Treasury Bench, but it was noted that Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, the Foreign Secretary, was not yet in his place. Nor were Mr. CHURCHILL and Mr. ANTHONY EDEN on the other side of the Table. Questions went on. Mr. GEORGE ISAACS, the Minister of Labour, got into hot water because he threw cold water on the idea that more builders should be released from the Forces. Murmuring something generally taken to be a mention of the inefficiency of setting a snare in the sight of the intended victim, Mr. ISAACS asked for time to look up what his predecessor had said, before pledging himself to follow the same policy.

Mr. SHINWELL, the Minister of Fuel and Power, pressed by a whole phalanx of Members to cut out petrol rationing, replied with sweetness that he'd love to, but we simply had to save dollars just now, and petrol was apt to cost dollars, not only to buy but to transport. The whole thing was done so charmingly that the House looked a trifle ashamed to have made so unreasonable a demand.

Mr. SHINWELL seemed surprised at the easy passage.

Colonel THORNTON KEMSLEY aroused memories of a former Chancellor's contempt for "those damned dots" by making a trifling correction to a question as printed on the Question-paper. He wanted £1,000,000 altered

to £100,000,000. The amendment seemed to make no appreciable difference to the answer.

Then Mr. ATTLEE, the Prime Minister, came mildly into action with a few trifles about the atom bomb, a victory march of the triumphant British forces, and the possibility of free postage for M.P.s.

He then made his bow in a new rôle—new, that is, to those who have not had the advantage of hearing him in private conversation—that of wit. Somebody asked him whether work on industrial research could be pressed

insistence that France and China should be excluded from talks on Balkan peace treaties, onlookers wondered whether there was significance in the get-together in the gallery.

However, the tone of Mr. BEVIN's statement left little room for bounding optimism. He made it clear that the conference had failed, after three weeks of hard work, on the fundamental issue whether the Great Powers alone, or all the United Nations together, were to make the future world through the peace treaties. Mr. MOLOTOV said "The Great Powers alone"; the rest said "All the United Nations." And so it broke up, with nothing done.

Mr. BEVIN's was a courageous statement, delivered with the objectiveness of a B.B.C. news-reader—precisely the right touch. There were loud and sympathetic cheers for the Foreign Secretary, who had worked day and night for the success of the conference, and was so patently unhappy about the result—or the lack of it.

The story was a simple one. Mr. MOLOTOV, having agreed, at the first meeting, that all Foreign Ministers attending the conference should be present at all meetings, irrespective of the subject under discussion, later (eleven days later, to be precise) went back on that undertaking and asked that various nations, including the U.S.A., be excluded when certain business was brought forward.

"To this," said Mr. BEVIN sturdily, "I felt I could not agree!"

The cheer he got could have left him (and the occupants of the Ambassadors' Gallery) in no doubt that his action was approved.

Mr. CHURCHILL jumped up to say that the statement was an excellent one, and that the Opposition would consult the Government about a debate later on.

Everybody bowed to everybody else, and while the coming was good Mr. CHURCHILL, the Home Secretary, skipped to the Table to move the Second Reading of a Bill which (according to the advance publicity) was to have been the occasion for a do-or-die battle between the "Controllers" and the "No-Controllers." In other words, those who think it a good idea to have, in peace-time, wartime Government control of goods and services, and those who (to put it unadjectivally) do not. Mr. EDE mentioned disarmingly that it was almost the same Bill as that left on the Governmental doorstep by the Caretaker Government before the election, except that it was intended to live for five years instead of the two intended by Mr. CHURCHILL's Government.



"We don't intend to be left behind in any revolution."

THE PRIME MINISTER

forward "so that we are not left standing in the next industrial revolution."

"We don't intend to be left behind in any revolution!" flashed the Premier, and was rewarded with the loudest and longest cocktail of cheers—and laughter—awarded since the present Parliament was elected.

But that was the only light relief in the whole afternoon. Just then Mr. BEVIN came in, looking tired and unhappy. He glanced up at the crowded Ambassadors' Gallery, where Mr. GUSEV, the Soviet Ambassador, sat between Dr. WELLINGTON KOO, the Chinese Ambassador, and M. MASSIGLI, the French.

As the Conference of Foreign Ministers broke down on Mr. MOLOTOV's



"No, no, Mr. Methuselah! Not an annuity, please. What you want is a nice ordinary Life Policy."

This implication that the nation could not have enough of a good thing was not accepted with any enthusiasm by Mr. OLIVER LYTTELTON, who spoke for the Opposition. Why not keep to the two crowded years of inglorious life planned by the Caretakers, he asked, and then let the kid live on, on a day-to-day basis, for another two or three years, if need be?

All Mr. EDE's humanitarian instincts rebelled against this precarious life, however, and in the end the Bill got a Second Reading without a division. But there are other stages for the Bill to pass. . . .

On the adjournment Mr. ALFRED EDWARDS raised a cry from the heart on behalf of those Members who can find no place whereon to lay their heads (roughly speaking) or wherein to dictate their letters. He suggested that a spot of requisitioning should be indulged in for the direct benefit of the homeless M.P.s. This idea did not commend itself overwhelmingly to the Ministry of Works, for which Mr. J. H. WILSON replied, taking his place among the immortal few whose maiden speeches have been made from the Treasury Bench.

He promised to see what could be done. But as he added that Ministers (now much more numerous than they were then) have still to make do with the same number of rooms as they had in the year 1539, nobody built too many castles in the air.

Wednesday, October 10th.—The most important thing that happened in the Commons to-day was that Mr. HUGH DALTON, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, nodded his massive head. In doing so he formally presented a Bill to nationalize the Bank of England and to call that venerable Old Lady up for Government service. A lot more will be heard on this subject when the Bill is considered in detail, for these innocent-looking Bills are not always what they seem.

Far more interesting and picturesque was the business of the House of Lords, where Lord MARCHWOOD (Sir GEORGE PENNY as was) was going up a step in the peerage and taking his seat as a Viscount. It is a pity he is too busy to start a School of Deportment for the Nobility, for his bows—not too low, not too haughty—were just right. He took off his cocked hat at the order of tabarded Garter King

of Arms, bowed to the Lord Chancellor, repeated the drill three times (without a single "As you were!" from Sergeant-Major Garter), and that was that.

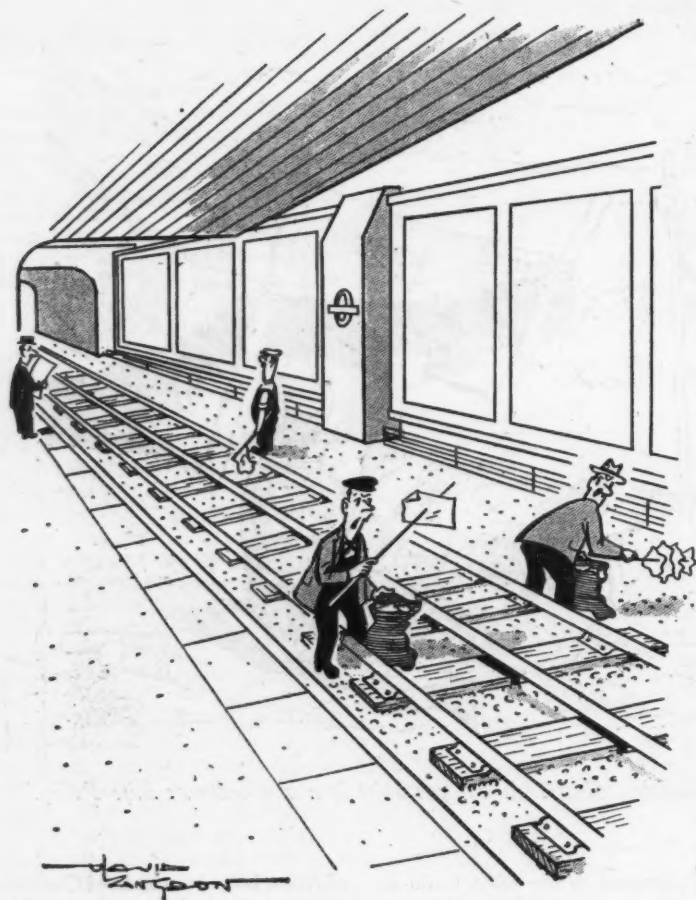
The "right trusty and well-beloved George," as the patent read out by the Clerk described him, was now free to take his place "with other Viscounts."

A Parliamentary star (as Hollywood would have it) was born to-day—Miss ALICE BACON, youngest woman M.P., who made her maiden speech. And a fine, ringing, sincere effort it was, drawing cheers and congratulations from all sides.

Thursday, October 11th.—Mr. JAMES GRIFFITHS, the Minister of National Insurance, promised "substantial" increases in old age and widows' pensions in a Bill which he (optimistically) promised for next year. This gave general pleasure, the only note of regret being that the increases would not become effective *this* winter.

The House went on to talk about the plan for the nationalization of responsibility for the payment of compensation to workmen injured at work. This was a piece of nationalization to which nobody took any exception, and the Bill passed safely on its way.





"Fivers still legal tender, George?"

## Topsy Turvy

**T**RIX, my restored exile, do you see a ray of hope, I mean all this cosmic acidity and gloom, it's too fraying, however one gleam is that you're back from Medicine Hat at last, or was it *Moose Jaw*, I forget, and I do grovel about my utter reticence while you were distant, only I merely could not write letters to the remotest places like Canada, I mean across oceans, and of course everything went round by Cape Horn or Lapland and took a century, so one thought Well, if ever this does touch Medicine Hat the chances are that all one's windows will have been detonated again, and the little old ashes may be at Golder's Green, too misleading, so it seemed the kindly thing not to utter at all, if you see what I mean, not to mention that when I imagined you and your over-rated young at work upon a peach-fed

ham while poor Haddock and me were prowling hungrily from dust-bin to dust-bin, the little stomach missed five beats and the pen fell from the malnourished fingers, besides darling, you must comprehend, life in the big city during the late conflict was a shade distracting and unadapted to protracted correspondence, my dear you can't imagine what the doodle-bugs were like, quite the most unfriendly gesture of the whole series, my dear Haddock and me were mere magnets for the pests, it seems they had a wireless attachment and simply hounded some people about, the ones on the Black List I mean, which Haddock was it seems, and of course the instant one sat down to write you the longest letter those emetical sirens performed and one had to keep away from the glass, when we had any, and lie flat on the

floor, but of course not too flat because of the blast effect on the old abdomen, the most complicated drill, darling, with the little rump uplifted, well if you scorned the action it was too likely you found yourself standing in the street with utterly no clothes on, my dear I've been prostrate in all the wettest gutters from the Savoy to West London, rather a strain on the wardrobe because of course no coupons allowed for gutter-work, but my dear Hermione Tarver, you remember her surely, she must be eighty now, was too meticulous about her one frock and was blasted quite naked in Church Street Kensington, too embarrassing, so it only shows, then of course we had four incendiaries on the roof, a normal bomb at the bottom of the garden, and the most malignant rocket three hundred yards away, however belay there, as Haddock says, I must desist and withdraw, because my dear, Haddock's already started this morbid anniversary habit, my dear the last fine Sunday we had which was months ago he came down to breakfast and said Five years ago I tied my ship up to a buoy marking a mine, to which of course the one response was How careless darling, which didn't ring any bells, and the next Sunday it was the entire Surrey Docks in flames, or the House of Commons eliminated or something, and my dear what with the anniversaries of the last war and the war before that, there's practically no day now which doesn't begin with some gruesome reminiscence, but my dear does he ever remember the twins' birthday not to mention his countless god-children's, not ever, not utterly ever, however all I was trying to say was, Don't be too wounded about my war-reticence, you do understand don't you poppet, then of course there was security, but I won't go into that now, only there was literally nothing you could say which mightn't give nearly everything away, even the weather was a septic theme, except in the Straits of Dover, and that I expect you saw in the papers.

It was too galling not to see you as you flashed through the city, but of course if it means you took one look at London and said to Henry, Gosh, no, remove me rapidly, I couldn't abuse you less, my dear isn't it the zenith of agony, or do I mean the nadir, anyhow I don't suppose for a moment you could have secured a couch anywhere, you have to give years of notice and then it's a guinea a minute, with 10 per cent. for service and no service, and my dear of course we're utterly couchless because the builders are in, my dear they've just

got round to the last bomb but one, not counting that *unethical* rocket which I must say they did *alacritously*, or some of it, but of course now I've painted the two top rooms for the twins they're *opening up* the roof and the *entire sky* will enter from now till Yule-time, *what a life* and it's the *most* seductive *cerulean blue* with *indications* of toe-nail pink, and then of course the *food*, my dear, I can't recall when I ate *last*, I mean *ate*, though of course doing *all* the cooking I never *want* to eat extensively unless it's a *boiled egg* and we get them once a month *some months*, my dear *do* you remember the days when one tried to get the evening meal *too late* at some *insanitary* little hotel in a *cathedral* town and they said Sorry we've *only* got *breakfast dishes* and one turned up the little old nose at them, Gosh *only* breakfast dishes! *only* bacon and eggs and *kidneys*, and *do* you remember the County breakfasts when one *stalked* up and down the sideboard, *peering* haughtily at dish by dish, *spurning* kidneys on toast, *shuddering* away from *fried fish* and utterly *debating* whether one would *stoop* to a little sausage and bacon or stave off famine with *buttered eggs* and *mushrooms*, Oh dear of course Haddock says he doesn't think we shall *quite* ever see civilization again, well, not in *our* time, and by civilization Haddock means *hams*, I think he's *so* right for once. I mean a real *total* ham on the sideboard *always*, so that *whenever* the pangs of famine occurred one could *mutilate* the ham a piece and win through till the next meal, which reminds me darling of Haddock's *pet* song, I Do Like a Nibble in the Night, do you know it, because in the old days when he was *too* inspired he used to write novels and things *all night*, only when the *afflatus* failed there was always the *hugest* ham in the larder or at least a cold but enchanting leg of bird, and after a nibble and a noggin or two he'd *perpetrate four more chapters*, as it is the poor dear slinks muttering to bed and writes *practically nothing*, so perhaps there is something to be said for having *special rations* for literary households, however of course one can always *crawl* out to a restaurant, if you can get sitting-space, I don't say *food*, because my dear the *most* imperceptible gin costs half- or *three-quarters-a-crown*, and if they add the tiniest adjunct in the shape of *flavouring*, my dear the mere *dregs* of the grape-yard after the Wop-women have stamped out everything else with their *contagious* feet, well that sinks *four shillings* for a single sniff, and as

for eatery one consumes *practically* nothing but *cats* and *dogs*, my dear *fried kitten* is *too succulent actually*, but one has one's *principles* well mustn't one, darling, and then of course *no help* in the *home*, when I tell you that *since* Alamein I've had *one* daily for two precarious hours, no more, and now of course what with her *redundant* husbands and sons all *swarming* back from the wars my *angelic* Mrs. Bee is *so* fussed with feeding the soldiery that she has less and less time for your pathetic T., who is a blue mass of *varicosity* from *excessive* standing at the shop or sink, as of course are *all* the nation's

matrons, but darling *don't* think for a moment that I'm *wilting* about having you, because *do* come *whenever* you like, of course it *won't* be the same as *Medicine Hat*, or was it *Moose Jaw*, but we'll manage somehow, and we *must* have the cosiest chat, O Gosh I've not told you a *thing* about the *twins* yet, and if one *can't* get a table anywhere one can nearly always find a *free* seat on the *Victoria Embankment* or *Sloane Square Station*, and Haddock says I *do* make the *most filling* sandwiches out of *completely* nothing, so do come soon darling, farewell for a fraction, your devoted Topsy.

A. P. H.



"Sorry, old man, can't play golf with you this afternoon. I've got a man coming here to teach me to roll my own cigarettes."

## At the Play

"THE SHOUTING DIES"

(LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)

"MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION"

(TORCH)

THE distinguished managements banded together at Hammersmith in the Company of Four have begun their season of experiment rather oddly. We were wondering the other night what could have urged the choice of Miss RONDA KEANE's new play, a piece as sincerely expressed as felt, but without any noticeable dramatic spark. It is, indeed, hardly more than a topical anecdote spread over three acts.

We are to suppose that when upon the war-fronts the shouting dies, unexpected tumult shakes the Willard household in a small American town near Memphis. There is a single night of alarm, coinciding with an electric storm. At its close, Kurt the blue-eyed Dane (self-styled) who had wooed *Susanna Willard*, is leaving the house as a confessed German and a former Nazi. Though guarded grimly by *Susanna's* other true love *Hank*—a soldier from the wars returned—Kurt does not get far: a rifle is lying to his grasp, and the shot that has ended so many plays ends this also.

Certainly Miss KEANE's intentions are irreproachable. She is opposing any move towards easy forgiveness. Once a Nazi, she says, ever a Nazi. Remembering the horrors of Belsen and Buchenwald, she cries in effect: "No dealings with Diabolus as long as Mansoul stands!" Well and good; but her play is not dramatically designed. From the first it is apparent that *Hank Peters* must win, and that *Kurt Sigrist*, evasive charmer with a laden conscience, must lose; Miss KEANE is content to make the obvious points, and her only excitement is a short fist-fight which grows to a hearty all-in scrimmage across the Willard floor.

We are left to seek what cheer we may from some flickers of domestic comedy, and from the quality of the performance. Here are better tidings,

for Mr. MURRAY MACDONALD, the producer, has enlisted an impressive company of six. *Susanna*, who wavers between *Kurt* and *Hank*, is Miss MARGARET JOHNSTON. Her powers have developed since she appeared in *The Last of Summer* fifteen months ago, and she plays the girl simply and sensitively. The men are Mr. JOHN SLATER as the nerve-strained soldier back from his travels in Europe and standing no nonsense from any German; and Mr. GERARD HINZE, whose *Kurt*, "a being," in the words of Buzfuz,

something a little more actable. Meanwhile, everyone must be glad that a theatre of rich traditions is again pricked upon the map.

London Shavians (whose memories of the Lyric are recent) continue to have a fruitful year. The notorious *Mrs. Warren* is now back in town; collectors will find her at the top of the Torch Theatre's stair in Wilton Place, Knightsbridge. This early sociological piece lay so long upon the Censor's shelf that it returns a dusty

answer to producer and players. *Mrs. Warren's* confession of the infamous traffic forced upon her by economic pressure holds its power; but what are we to say of her relentless daughter *Vivie*, the "ever so" boyish *Frank*, and *Sir George* the bad baronet? The London Theatre Group under Mr. ERIC CROZIER gives a valiant rendering on a tea-tray stage, and Miss OLGA EDWARDES, in particular, gets at the heart of *Vivie*, a young woman who seems to reside in "thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice." The play reminds us, incidentally, of the high times they had in Surrey during 1893, with *Mrs. Warren* in full blaze at Haslemere and Pinero's *Paula Tanqueray* agonizing down at "Higher-coombe." How pleasant if the pair had met!

## "HAMLET" (ARTS)

Little in the life of Mr. ALEC CLUNES's *Hamlet* becomes him better than his end. We feel earlier in the evening that this *Hamlet* lacks depth, that we are not so much in the presence at

Elsinore as in the company of a good Shakespearean actor who is rendering the part with a gentle sincerity unburnished by inspiration. But as the play wears, *Hamlet's* power grows. Though the performance wants imaginative passion, it has a true quality of tenderness and a simple nobility. In the graveyard scene Mr. CLUNES manages the moralizing over the skulls as well as we have heard it spoken, and thence, to the last scene of all, *Hamlet* is in full authority. He is the centre of an ingenious small-scale production, adorned by Mr. MARK DIGNAM's smiling villain of a King with a steel-trap mind. J.C.T.



## AMERICAN HOSPITALITY BRINGS DOWN THE HOUSE.

<i>Kurt Sigrist</i> . . . . .	MR. GERARD HINZE
<i>Hank Peters</i> . . . . .	MR. JOHN SLATER
<i>Susanna Willard</i> . . . . .	MISS MARGARET JOHNSTON
<i>Ed Willard</i> . . . . .	MR. WALTER MARTIN
<i>Amy Willard</i> . . . . .	MISS JOAN YOUNG

"erect upon two legs, and bearing all the outward semblance of a man and not of a monster," gains and loses our sympathy with a pleasant ease. Her casting as *Mrs. Antrobus* in the stormy æons of *The Skin of Our Teeth* was proof enough that Miss JOAN YOUNG could play any Main Street mother we cared to name, and she now copes efficiently with the Willard house, her sour cherry preserve, and her amiable partner (Mr. WALTER MARTIN). Mr. MICHAEL WEIGHT's décor is a delight. Next month the Company of Four sweeps on to *The Trojan Women* of Euripides in a fresh translation by Mr. KINCHIN SMITH. There, we feel, is



## Diary of an Undemobbed

October 1st

### THE FORENOON WATCH

*Two Bells* (0900). When the lubberly civilian thinks of the Royal Navy, the Silent, Senior Service, the Watchdog of the Seas, does he not think almost exclusively of ships, and of Viking figures keen-eyed and resolute on ships' bridges, of heroic perspiring giants in ships' boiler-rooms, or of gay adventurers of the seas nautically jovial in ships' messes or ships' ward-rooms?

He does, which proves his lubberliness. For the Navy has a penchant for getting into queer places which have absolutely nothing at all to do with ships. For my own part I have seen salty A.B.s living in the middle of the Libyan desert like a bunch of blue-jeaned Arabs. I have found them installed on the topmost floor of a New York skyscraper. I have watched them flying helicopters in Oklahoma...

And here they are now, Britain's bell-bottoms, rolling steadily along a picturesque lane in rural Hampshire on a dewy, autumnal morning, picking blackberries from the hedgerow, or, from the ditch, a simple flower of the field to tuck into the cap tally. Here is a brassbound Commander, with oak-leaved peak and resolute jaw, striding down a soft green avenue of elms. Two cables astern a weather-beaten Gunner (Temporary Acting) keeps a sharp look out to port and starboard. Two Lieutenants, R.N.V.R., creak slowly past on aged bicycles.

The Gunner is looking for mushroom-rooms.

A turn two points north, and the flotilla passes in through a white wooden gate on which, in a tasteful Arcadian scroll is inscribed:

### The Cottage

Once through the gate, the bell-bottoms keep on their course, but the Gold Braid turns to port, steams steadily along a path of new gravel bordered by Michaelmas daisies, and enters what appears to be an igloo built of corrugated iron.

*Three Bells* (0930). The forenoon is well under way. The mail has come in. There is a letter from the Commander's sister-in-law in Chiswick, and a more official-looking envelope for the Gunner.

The Gunner has gone to look for the Third Officer, W.R.N.S., to see if she has a bag for his mushrooms.

*Stand Easy* (1020). Pinkie has made some cocoa. Pinkie is the W.R.N.S.

driver. She has time to make the cocoa because the car is out of action.

The car has been out of action for nine days.

*Seven Bells* (1100). The sun is shining beautifully through the igloo windows. The Commander has *The Times* open before him on his desk. He is reading it with his eyes shut.

The Torpedo Lieutenant moves to the window and looks out at the sunshine and the Michaelmas daisies. Bees and butterflies are busy about the bright blue flowers.

"Good Lord! There's at least a dozen Red Admirals out here!" he exclaims. The Torpedo Lieutenant is a lover of Nature.

But these innocent words produce a most remarkable effect. The Commander suffers a painful upheaval. He leaps to his feet, crushing *The Times* with nerveless fingers. He grabs desperately for his cap.

"Where? For God's sake—where?" he cries.

"Out here." The Torpedo Lieutenant points excitedly out of the window.

"A dozen WHAT?" The Commander has gone deathly pale.

"Red Admirals. On the Michaelmas daisies."

The gold-peaked cap drops from the Commander's heedless fingers. With a groan he sinks limply back into his chair.

"My God," he says, "I thought you said rear-admirals."

The Gunner has returned with his bag and has opened his letter. It is a bill from the gas company.

### THE AFTERNOON WATCH

*Four Bells* (1400). Dinner is over. The Commander, the Lieutenants and the Gunner are frolicking in the meadows. The Gunner has found three more mushrooms. The black-berry crop is excellent this year. The Commander has made a note in his diary to bring a paper bag to-morrow.

*Six Bells* (1500). A hush has fallen on the office. The Commander is again reading *The Times* with his eyes shut. The Electrical Lieutenant has finished his crossword. The Torpedo Lieutenant has moved his chair out on to the lawn the better to watch the Red Admirals.

*Seven Bells* (1530). Pinkie has made the tea. The car is still out of action.

The Paymaster Commander has come in for a cup of tea. Our own Commander has a cup of tea and a bun. The Electrical Lieutenant has a cup of tea and a bun. The Torpedo

Lieutenant has come in from watching the Red Admirals and he has a cup of tea and a bun. The Gunner has a cup of tea and a bun. But the Paymaster Commander has no bun. Only the officers of our department are allowed to have the departmental buns. This is an inexorable rule. The Paymaster Commander is not in our department. His igloo is on the other side of the lawn. Therefore the Paymaster Commander, though a senior officer, is bunless. A serious subversal of discipline.

The Third Officer, W.R.N.S., has recently issued a circular letter to all the departments about the time wasted daily in the distribution of buns.

Presumably the Paymaster Commander can have a bun in his own igloo.

*Eight Bells* (1600). The Commander has been reading *The Times* with his eyes open for some time now. At last he folds it carefully and reaches for his cap.

This is the signal.

### THE FIRST DOG WATCH

*One Bell* (1630). The Commander strides out of the white wooden gate. The Gunner follows close astern. The two Lieutenants, R.N.V.R., creak slowly past. The bell-bottoms are hully-down on the horizon...

How long, O Lord?

## A Thought for Denman Street

YOUNG man in a purple suit, balanced on pointed ginger feet at the corner of Denman Street, selling illicit silk stockings with fancy clockings in the furtive half-light of a dirty drunken Piccadilly night; young man in a purple suit doing a little business on the side, it was not for you my son died.

He died (not that you care) because once, long ago, you were kind to your mother, and because at one time or another you have spoken the truth.

For Truth and Love he seemed, in his youth, to die, but by and by you will find, when you come to count the cost, it is you we mourn, you who are lost, young man in a purple suit. V. G.



"You'll fall in, Alfie, and then some kind gentleman will 'ave to jump in after you, fully clothed, and probably lose 'is life."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Dr. Chaim Weizmann

IN this tribute on his seventieth birthday to Chaim Weizmann (GOLLANCZ, 10/6), the editor, Mr. PAUL GOODMAN, opens with an editorial note thanking his numerous contributors. Then comes a Foreword by Earl Lloyd George, written shortly before his death, a preface by Mr. L. S. Amery, and an introduction by Mr. Goodman himself. These preliminaries are rather confusing, but would matter little if they introduced the reader to a clear account of the life and work of the great statesman whose life-long struggle to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine seems at the moment to be as far as ever from a successful conclusion. Unfortunately the body of the book is almost as confusing as the situation it ought to have clarified. It consists of three parts. Part One, which deals with Dr. Weizmann as the Zionist leader, contains fourteen chapters, each from a different pen. There is a chapter on the Zionist Commission in 1918, by Sir Leon Simon; there is Homage to Chaim Weizmann from Professor Harold Laski; there are Professor Joseph Klausner's early memories of Dr. Weizmann; there is an analysis of Dr. Weizmann by Professor Volcani, who does not much illuminate his subject in such sentences as "His character integrated both summit and base as a single unit"; there is "a non-Jewish view of Zionism" from Mr. Wickham Steed; and there is a Jewish view of Zionism from Colonel Meinertzhagen, who writes with a directness and vigour which at last bring the reader into close contact with the

passions and aspirations behind the Zionist movement—"The only solution to the Jewish Question is the gift of Palestine to Jewry. It should, and could, have been done in 1919. . . . But if Britain were now to make the gift, the Arabs throughout their numerous territories would rise in rebellion. . . . The Arabs never had much faith in H.M.G.; what little they had is vanished. The Jews had complete faith, now evaporated. That is the way of it." Part Two, which is entitled "Dr. Chaim Weizmann as Scientist," contains speeches he delivered at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, a chapter on his conception of the Hebrew University, and chapters on his contribution to microbiology and other branches of science. In Part Three we are given selections from twenty-seven speeches, delivered between 1907 and 1936. A careful reader will be able to divine in these speeches a leader comparable in tenacity and shrewdness to Lenin, whom Dr. Weizmann so closely resembles in appearance. But the most patient of readers prefers a book which does not compel him to do the author's or editor's work for him.

H. K.

### Afoot on the Via Media

It is not easy to recall a serviceable ecclesiastical biography written by a woman. Even unserviceable ones are rare. And if Miss E. M. ALMEDINGEN'S *Dom Bernard Clements* (LANE, 8/6) goes to swell the ranks of the latter—as unhappily it does—it is not for any defect in the subject or through any wilful slackness on the part of the author. She simply has not the equipment, native or acquired, to appraise the difficult career of a Benedictine monk in the Church of England. There was no particular need for appraisal. The facts of the life are eloquent and interesting. As a naval chaplain and a Portsmouth parson, Father Clements did admirable work until the *Summa's* eulogy of holy obedience led him Benedictinewards at forty. Five years of West Africa proved his missionary vocation up to the hilt, and his biographer states—with little documentary sanction—that he "burnt white-hot with rebellion" when recalled. Broadcasting, however, made amends; the more so as Dom Clements' audiences were spared the challenge of his habit, which indeed seems to have hindered rather than helped his apostolate. "He needn't call himself a Catholic at all, really," said a disgruntled listener, reassured. "He is an Evangelical through and through." H. P. E.

### Eastward Ho!

There is, besides many other things, romance, and romance that has its own unmistakable colour and flavour, in the histories of those Europeans who went adventuring to India—whether for God or for gain—in the days before British influence there became paramount. The adventurers left their mark and often their bones in the East, and the East had its own subtle effect on the countries of those Italians, Portuguese and English who did return. In *The Clear Heart* (HUTCHINSON, 9/6) Miss BARBARA BINGLEY tells the story of an Italian, one Alviso Moro, sculptor, shipbuilder, worshipper of beauty, who, about the middle of the seventeenth century, intent on fine woods for his vessels, finds himself in the Ganges delta mixed up with a rabble of piratical swashbucklers. He and his associate, that Manoel Coelho referred to in the memoirs of a traveller of the period as "one of those Portuguese who know neither God nor eternity," enlist their ships in the forces of Shah Shuja, and Alviso, in the character of a doctor, gets admission to his harem and learns to love its latest inhabitant. The story of Alviso and Ra'na-dil is a beautiful thing and their tragedy deeply moving. It is the theme of perhaps two

thirds of the book, and then it seems that the story breaks its back, for we begin all over again with the mission of the little Jesuit Father Bernardo. But the two very different lives of Alviso and Bernardo are linked together triumphantly at last when Alviso's lost masterpiece, his carving of Ra'na-dil as Our Lady, is thrown up by the river after an earthquake, saves the priest's life and converts his godless people. This story is written with a sure touch, obviously from a wide knowledge of place and period. With a little more inspiration and creative power it might have been a great novel; as it is, it is outstanding and very interesting.

B. E. S.

### Tempora Pessima

*The Peace that was Left* (CRESSET PRESS, 6/-) is not, for all its ambiguous phrasing, a peace adorned or disfigured by the aspirations of the proletariat. M. EMILE CAMMAERTS has set himself to explore—in this the third volume of his autobiography—what remain nowadays of our chances of peace; and, as a sincere and ardent Anglican, he is shocked to discover that, though many of us pray for peace, we do not repent of our own contributions to war. We protest our innocence, we accuse our enemies; and all our dispositions—if one may so theologically put it—point to an early resumption of hostilities. Lest his own outlook should seem too middle-aged and too gloomy, the writer takes counsel with a young and gallant daughter, her fiancé, and their friends in the services. Their letters display a parallel sense of decadence but a sturdier hope of combating it. M. CAMMAERTS sees the corruption of society as an occasion of Christian withdrawal—like the ages of the Desert Fathers, Little Gidding and Marvell's Bermudan exiles. The young consider that political action based on Christianity has a chance yet. Both are probably right, but the desert-seekers will be hard put to it to find a solitude they can call peace.

H. P. E.

### A Great Woman Doctor

Dr. ALFREDA WITHINGTON, an American lady who began to study medicine in 1881, when male prejudice against women doctors had hardly begun to disintegrate, has written a very attractive account of her long and remarkable career in *Mine Eyes Have Seen* (ROBERT HALE, 15/-). In her late twenties she completed her medical education in Europe, the Europe of sixty years ago, where at the delicatessen shops in Vienna "we found choice cooked meats, whole chickens roasted to a T and studded with bits of crisp brown pork," and at Leitmeritz on the Elbe the author and her friend were plunged into gloom because some Hussites; more than four hundred years earlier, had been tortured there. Returning to the States, and discovering that she had some slight symptoms of tuberculosis, she settled in the Berkshire hills of Massachusetts, becoming a general practitioner in Pittsfield. "I doubt," she writes, "if any life of service can give greater happiness than that of the family physician. 'To cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always.'" In her middle forties Dr. WITHINGTON joined the late Sir Wilfred Grenfell in Labrador, where he had founded a Mission for the deep-sea fishermen, enduring and even enjoying her life in those bleak latitudes for many years. During the last war she served in France, where she remained till 1921. Back once more in the States, she was attracted by an advertisement for a woman physician for settlement work in the Kentucky mountains—"all calls to be made on horseback, no other licensed physician within twenty-five miles." This was her last appointment, taken up when she was sixty-one and not relinquished till she had passed her seventieth year. H. K.

### Builders

To bring water to a dry valley on the rainless side of a mountain chain an aqueduct was bored clean through the range and one of earth's wildest torrents deflected to a distant sea. To carry a railway for twenty-seven miles through some of the roughest country ever surveyed thirty-seven tunnels and ninety-two bridges were needed. Floods, wild animals, disease and the remoteness of jungle or desert added fabulous difficulties. These things and a hundred others like them were done in India, planned and directed by British engineers most of whose names are wholly unknown to their fellow-countrymen. That India has had considerably better than a good bargain in her unique partnership with this country is directly attested by a constantly rising population, by an immense network of road and rail, and above all by some of the world's greatest and most fruitful irrigation schemes. Mrs. MAUD DIVER, setting out to draw attention in *The Unsung* (BLACKWOOD, 12/6) to noble public works not always appreciated here and to the unnoticed men who generation after generation have given life and genius to their construction, is performing a service that is as useful as it is well timed. All the more, therefore, it is a real misfortune that her love for India and Indian history draws her too often into diffuse if picturesque byways. In particular her account of the siege of Delhi in '57, true and spirited though it may be, seems out of key in such a recital of benefits bestowed and confidence won. Without wishing to detract from a genuine accomplishment one would have gladly seen rather less reference to familiar aspects of the Indian scene and more technical detail of some of the great enterprises enumerated.

C. C. P.



"Remember when you promised to wait for me for ever, Maggie? Well, I'm Group 42."





"Wrens' Division, one teeny, weeny pace forward—march!"

## Lost Property

By Smith Minor

**N**OTE i. If you find the above tittle rather dull, I cuold of made it more interesting, only I didn't want you to know what was lost untill you came to it. End of Note i.

Note ii. Green thort I ouht to of waited untill next year before writing this artickle, becorse it is about something that hapened during the summer holidays, and gone, alas, are those rosyate days when, insted of enjoying yourself only at odd times, you are free to do it

"From early morn till latish night,  
Indoors if dull, outdoors if bright,  
But now, no more on pleasure bent,  
We all are back from where we  
went,"

he (Green) saying that therefore an artickle on summer was no good in October, that is, if this is published in October, wich you never know, it might even be November, making it even worse. But I said,

"I see what you mean, Green, but when a happy time has gone, don't you think some poeple like to hark back to the past?"

"No, one ouht to live in the present," he said.

You can see from this that Green is a deap thinker. Jest the same, I said,

"Supose you're at a dentist's?"

"Then you can't help yourself," he said. "Nothing can stop you."

After that we cuoldn't think of anything more, so we stoped, and thouth

Green may of been right, I decided to write what I'd been going to, i.e., what you are now going to read. End of Note ii.

It hapened on the last day of my holiday, I then being at that well-known resort now called Brighton, but in ye olden days called Brightonhemstow (I think). I was standing on the crouded beach, working out how many months, weeks, days, and hours it wuold be before I was there again, like one dose, I hadn't got as far as minits, when sudenly I spotted a child of uncertain sex that there seamed to be something wrong with. It was very small and it was in a red bathing suite, and somehow you felt sorry for it without knowing why. You get the same fealing sometimes with animals, not all, but some. For instence, I can never tell if a frog's happy or not, but I always know when a snail's off colour. It is what's called an instinckt.

Anyhow, I thort I'd better see what was wrong with this small child, so I went up to it and I said,

"Hullo, is anything the matter?"

It answered something, but I can't tell you what, becorse I don't know. Untill children have learnt to talk properly you have to be their parents to understand what they say. But as it did seam to be trying to tell me that something *was* the matter, I pretended it had said, "Yes," and asked, "What?" and then it took hold of my hand, and well, there we were. I felt a bit funny.

"Have you got a pane?" I said.

It seamed to say, "No."

"Do you want a hankerchif," I said.

I've studded children a bit, and it's often one or the other. But again it seamed to say, "No." Then I said,

"Are you looking for anyone?"

And then it seamed to say, "Yes," and all at once, lo! I got on to it. It was lost!

Now there were two things I cuold of done, the first was to let go its hand, pretend I had seen someone I knew, and leave it, and the second was to stick it out untill I'd found who it belonged to. I beleive I'd of done the first, becorse poeple who sometimes write to me think I'm better than I really am, but all at once I remembered a time when I'd been lost and what it had felt like, and an old man with no teath had taken me into his cottage and fed me with bullseyes untill I was found, it was desent of him, becorse even if you've no teath you can still suck them.\* Anyhow, remembering him, and having one peardrop, I gave

\* Bullseyes. Author.

it to the child and then had a look around.

Seeing a young man and a young woman lying on the sand and looking a bit gloomy, I went up to them and said.

"Excuse me, but have you got a baby?"

The woman got red, don't ask me why, and the man said angrily,

"What the Z— do you mean?"

Note. The word I've not written didn't begin with Z, but if I put the letter it really began with you'd properly guess what it was. End of note.

"I meant what I said," I said, "but as you don't seem to have one, never mind, I'll try someone else."

The next person I tried was an old man, and one felt a bit more hopeful with him because he looked in a real stue. I thort I'd begin diferently this time, so I said,

"Are you looking for anything?"

"Yes, I am," he said.

Showing him the child, I then said,

"Is this it?"

And he then said,

"No, young man, it's my glass eye."

"My hat," I said.

"No, my eye," he said. "But luckily I've got another to look for it with." Then he dived down and found it.

Well, after that I tried several more poeple, and I was jest wondering how long one went on before one gave up when I came upon a tall thin man who looked rather like one of my uncles, of course you don't know him, the uncle, but I thort I'd menshun it, and as I heard him saying to a woman with a dog, "I can't find him anywhere," I felt as thouth a great whaight had been lifted off me, as they say, and I said, "Here he is, sir," and he turned round beeming. But then he shook his head, and said,

"No, mine's in a green bathing suite."

"I suppose you're quite sure, sir," I said.

"Of corse I'm sure," he said. "If this one was mine I'd know him, wuoldn't I, and he'd know me."

"I grant you'd know him," I said, "but he wuoldn't know you, he dosen't know anybody."

That was quite true. The only person he seemed to know was me. Another funny thing about him was that every time I let go my hand he took it again. One thing I've notised about babies is that they don't seem to mind how silly one looks.

Well, the next thing that hapened was a man with a beard who came up and said,

"I've been watching you, young

feller, and do you know what I'd do if I was in your place?"

"What?" I said.

"Throw him back into the sea and let him float in somewhere else," he said.

"Oh, come," I said. "He mightn't float in anywhere."

"You don't say so," he said.

We might of gone on a bit longer, but sudenly I saw something that gave me an idea. It was a baby in a green bathing suite being toted about by a lady with fuzzie hair. Getting to her as quickly as one cuold,

"Throuh' poeple sprauling in deck-chairs,

Or lying on the sands in pairs,"

I said,

"Excuse me, but is yours lost?"

"Yes," she said.

"So's mine," I said. "Shall we swop for a change?"

Now, you've got to admit, I wasn't being quite fair, because I knew whose hers belonged to, but I didn't know whose mine did. It didn't work, thouth, as to be fair it shuoldn't of, she saying,

"Yes, I'll swop. Yours is mine!"

And then she swooped away with the one I'd had, leaving me with the one she'd got rid of, wich I neadn't of had if I'd jest given her hers back.

Well, here I was again, with only what you might call *un change de couleur*, and now what I had to do was to find the tall thin man who looked like one of my uncles. But sudenly, there he was with his back to me, i.e., the tall thin man, not one of my uncles,

and it seemed as if at last my troubles were o'er. But when I said, "Please, sir, here's yours," he turned round, and lo! it wasn't, he not being.

"My what?" he said.

"I thort this was your baby," I said.

"What baby?" he said.

And then I saw I hadn't one. It was legging it towards the sea as fast as it cuold go.

Honestly I felt so depressed that I very nearly didn't go after it, but of corse one had to, so I put on a sprint, and bumped into the man who had lost his eye, he'd lost it again. I was jest catching the baby up when another man swooped on it like an eagel, he turning out to be the tall thin man I'd thort the other man was.

"Here, you leave it alone!" he cried. "Are you trying to run off with every baby on the beech?"

"Oh, come!" I said.

I've found out that one doesn't often get thanked in this rather quear world, but anyhow, there wasn't anything more now for me to do, so I went on with my counting and worked out how many minits it wuold be before the next summer holiday. I can never manadge the seconds.

Note. Green may of been right about this artickle, but one hopes not. End of note.

"His hours of leisure away from music were devoted to avoid reading of poetry and prose, both English and foreign."

*Forces magazine.*

Concentration, that's the secret.



"... And here is your husband's little den."

## Das Plastic Mind

"DEPSLOP," I said to my deputy, Lieutenant Tackle—I always use his official title when making some major *pronunciamento*—"Depslop, we have not yet fraternized. Weeks ago, Depslop, Feldmarschall Montgomery gave us the freedom of the streets, in which to explain to suitable Herrenvolk the sweetness of the British Way of Life. But, Depslop, you and I have done strictly nothing about it because, when at large, we always go about in this car, barouche or tumbril so originally conducted by Marine Tickler. We are never actually on the streets. Consequently, although you no doubt wish, and I am able, to explain the B.W.O.L. to the Teuton, nothing occurs. I admit that at this moment we cannot do much about it because Naval Party 20000 at Bad Sauerkraut is 201 miles away, and that would make a long walk. But there will be halts by the roadside, Depslop, and passers-by, and I propose to address such shapes with vigour and I hope impunity."

A Rhine maiden was standing some way ahead on the verge of the Autobahn. "Give 'er a lift, sir?" said Marine Tickler, and I took the occasion not only to dilate upon the magnitude of this offence but to explain in simple terms the real objects of fraternization—re-education, regeneration and so on. "What we need to find, Tickler, is the Plastic Mind, and we will work upon it."

"Very good, sir," said Tickler.

A jeep passed us, in the back seat of which an ally was somewhat involved with a blonde lady. I explained to Tickler that she was undoubtedly Dutch. Another jeep passed, in the back seat of which another ally was somewhat involved with a dark-haired lady. I pointed out that she was beyond dispute an Italian co-ex-belligerent. We drew near a group of Rhine maidens. "Let's stop," said Tackle, "and talk to these Zulus."

It was, I think, very shortly after this that a more than usually acute screaming arose from the engine and aroused signs of consciousness, even animation, in Marine Tickler's countenance. He leant outboard—a favourite trick of his in these circumstances—and listened attentively. "It's that

there packin' of that there water-poopm," he said as we bounced back off the kerb again and near-missed a boy with a handcart. "We'd best stop."

We stopped and Tickler disappeared under the bonnet. The boy with the handcart came alongside and stopped too and gaped at us. There wasn't another soul in sight. The boy had bare and dirty feet with imperfect toe-nails. His face was that of an oversimplified cretin. He left his handcart and came near. "Tackle," I said, "this is the perfect fraternisee. Our Plastic Mind is here. Come, Tackle, let us address him." Tackle turned a glazed eye on the scene and went to sleep on the grass.

I spoke to the youth in a calm, dignified manner, using very simple German. My German is very simple. I told him of the importance of individual responsibility and gave him an objective sketch of German history from Schwiegerblitz to Hundapfel. I paused. "Kau-gummi? Chewing-gum?" he mouthed. I was patient. I

went on, in increasingly simple German, with plenty of gesture, to drive home to this Plastic Mind the importance of the Magna Carta, the Atlantic Charter, the Four Freedoms and the Ten Commandments. I paused again. The P.M. opened the door of the car and peered inside, "Kau-gummi? Chewing-gum?" it uttered. This M. wasn't as P. as I had thought. I lapsed into English. "Get," I said, "the hell out." But he didn't appear to understand even that, and I turned my back on him and joined Tackle in healthy slumber, until Tickler surfaced from beneath the car and we drove on.

An hour later the question of lunch arose and one hour after that we found a place for a picnic on which we could both agree in time to stop the car. We were very hungry by then; Tackle in fact was almost irritable. It was therefore with some impatience that we received Marine Tickler's assertion that he couldn't find the "K" rations anywhere, and it was with actual heat that Tackle and I threw every movable object out of the car until the bleak truth emerged: our rations, our three neat cardboard boxes filled with every desirable delicacy, were just not there.

Tackle, I must confess, was very restrained. He used only two words. "Plastic Mind." That was all he said.

Just before we got under way again a Rhine maiden passed carrying a large basket of plums. "Good afternoon," Tackle said, "one of your compatriots has just from us our so appetitesatisfying midday-eats pinched. You will therefore us some fruit hand over, no?" The girl smiled uncomprehendingly and for no apparent reason gave us some plums.

"The object of fraternization . . ." began Tackle.

I am, I hope, a good staff officer, not without practice in the correct handling of boomerangs. "Concur," I said, and that closed it.



"Hunch those shoulders; drive the hands deeper into the pockets; and try to slouch a bit more. Blimey, you'll never make civilians!"

Splash!

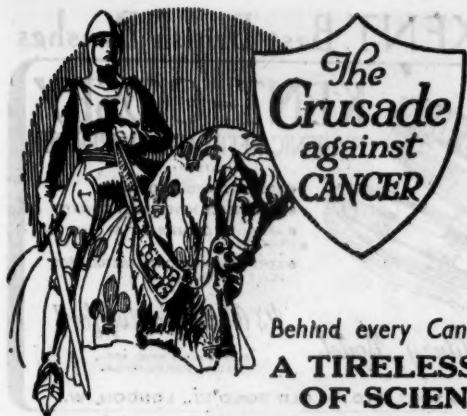
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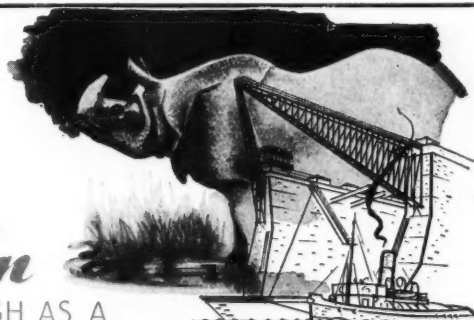


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